

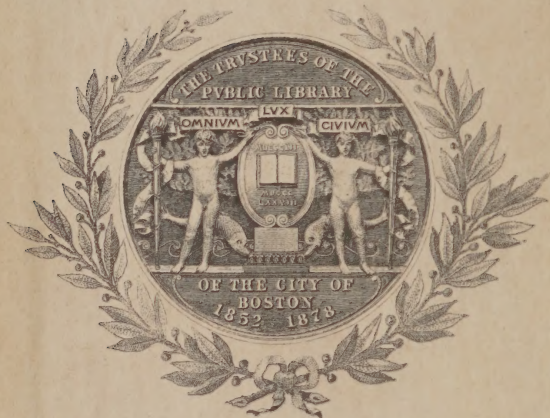
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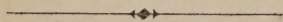
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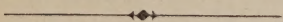
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CHRISTIAN
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Christian Education.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM G. FARRINGTON, A. M.

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This saying of Solomon, though often quoted, is rarely taken in its full and proper sense. To understand this, we must go to the original Hebrew, as usual by the wisest of men. The verb translated in our version “train up” means, first, “to put something into the mouth,” “to give to be tasted,” and then, by a common metaphor in which taste is applied to the understanding, “to imbue someone with a thing,” “to instruct.” Indeed, we have only to take an English Bible, with marginal readings, and there we shall find the word “Catechize,” which the King James’s translators put in the margin as an equivalent for, or explanation of, “train up.” Yes, this is what the wise man really meant to say. “Catechize a child in the way he should go,” or, as these words may also be rendered, “according to his way,” “and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

“Catechize,” that is, talk to him about the way of life. Question him respecting it, keep it before him from the earliest opening of his mind and hearing. Speak to him about it when thou liest down at night, and when thou risest up. And then “when he is old,” when he has come to years of discretion, when he must think and speak and act for himself, when he must assume the responsibilities of life, when

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he must leave the parental roof and be no longer under the eye of guardians and teachers, he will not depart from the good way wherein he has been taught to walk. He will remember the lessons which have been instilled into his mind, and will not reject the wise instruction of his father, nor the loving counsel of his mother. He will 'do his duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call him.' He will not shrink from the performance of all the vows and obligations which rightly rest upon him.

This explanation of the proverb of Solomon opens up to us a most important subject, one too much neglected as yet in this country, the subject, viz: Of the Christian Education of the Young.

It is related by one of our Western Bishops, that he was once on a long journey to the frontier with a Roman Catholic Priest, and several Protestant ministers not of our communion, all being commissioners appointed by the Government to inspect certain lands that were to be assigned to the Indians. Being shut up in one coach for many days, the angles gradually wore off, they became very amiable, and at last frankly communicative in regard to their spiritual work and principles of action. Finally, one day the Priest broke out: "How utterly silly are all you Protestants! You give up all the children, until they have grown up possessed of the devil; then you go at the work of reclaiming them with horse, foot, and dragoons, and find that the Great Enemy of

souls is too much for you! *We* know the difficulty of doing anything with *adults*, and devote nearly all our energies to the children, well knowing that *every child is as plastic clay in our hands*.

It is undoubtedly but too true, that in our country there is very little effort made in the way of the faithful, and systematic religious training of the young. In our schools and colleges Religion and Learning are well nigh divorced. In some cases, perhaps, the morning session is begun with a reading of a chapter of the Bible; in some an opening prayer is offered. Here a dry and formal treatise on Moral Philosophy is studied. Here Butler's Analogy is taught the upper class though not understood by one in ten of the pupils. Here the New Testament in Greek is a text-book. This is about the extent, though there are some notable exceptions. In our homes very little is even attempted. Prayer, as a rule, neither begins nor ends the day. The meals are eaten with no recognition of the "Giver of every good and perfect gift." The Bible is a sealed book—there is no time to read it. And as respects the influence of the Church, that is only felt once a week, and irregularly at that; for too often the children who do not attend the Sunday School, do not attend public catechizing, and are unbaptized and unconfirmed.

Such in a few words, is the true state of the case; and yet the wisest of men wrote the proverb, "Train up a child in the way he should go."

and when he is old he will not depart from it;" and St. Paul, speaking by the spirit of God, bids those who are fathers to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that is, in the words of Doddridge, "to give them such a course of discipline and instruction as properly belongs to a religious education." Says the late Bishop Doane, commenting on this passage, St. Paul, you see, requires that parents bring up their children up, not leave them to bring up themselves. He does not recognize that modern theory which leaves young children to their own wild will; and asks them what *their* pleasure is, for doctrine and discipline. But he acts upon those words which God applied to Abraham; "I know him, that he will *command* his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement.'"

In view of these facts, this discussion is not inopportune. Well were it if the pulpit and press could everywhere sound the alarm, and claim for this subject the attention which its paramount importance demands that it should receive. "The child is father of the man." "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines." As are the children, so will be the men and women.

Assuming that the obligation resting upon Christian parents to give their offspring a Religious Education will not be called in question, we proceed to show how and where this Education is to be conducted.

I. *It is to be begun at home.* Here is "a school always open, teaching as well by example as precept. Its voice is never silent through childhood and youth, and is not hushed among labors and trials of later years. The memory of a happy Christian home brings men back to that thought, at least, of the simplicity and purity of childhood, with a directness and power which unveil vice and disarm temptation." * In the school every child is to remain for the first seven years of its life, under the charge of its divinely appointed teachers, its parents—and during this period it should not be taught to read. If a child knows the alphabet in its seventh year, it is enough. "All physicians of knowledge or eminence," says Dr. Adams in his *Elements of Christian Science*, "are now well agreed upon the doctrine that mental education begun before the seventh year is of itself highly destructive, as prematurely exciting the nervous system, and laying the foundation for many diseases. . . . This hot-bed forcing the childish mind into premature action, produces mental feebleness in advancing years; and in many cases it causes mental oddity and distortion; just as the forcing a young tree to bear fruit before maturity, stunts and dwarfs it."

* Report on Christian Education made to the House of Deputies of the General Convention of 1865, and signed John B. Kerfoot, D. R. Goodwin, Wm. E. Armitage, V. R. Nicholson, Francis Vinton, James Bridge, Charles Lewis, Eli T. Wilder, and Jonas C. Heartt. As will be seen we have drawn largely from this admirable Report, whose wise and stirring utterances have already been powerful for good, and well deserve to be kept before the Church.

The only education which a child should receive during the first seven years of its life is embraced in the first two words of the proverb of Solomon as explained by the marginal reading "Catechize." The only instruction, in fact, which it is qualified to receive during this stage of its existence, is of an *oral* kind, instruction imparted through questions and answers and mainly designed to develope its moral powers, to enkindle its affections, to deepen its natural sense of right and wrong, to check the caprices of its fickle will. Its physical powers are yet weak and feeble, and its mind can only be developed at the expense of its body. The only fact of its threefold nature which can be stimulated with positive benefit is the moral part, the heart, the seat of the affections. And this the parents can effect through oral teaching, in one word, through "Catechizing." To ask questions is natural to the young child, and if these questions are only properly answered and occasion taken to suggest others of a suitable kind, the education of the child will be most surely and effectually advanced. †

† "There is an education that dwarfs not the infant mind, but invigorates its powers and enlarges its calibre—the *training*, that is, of the moral faculties. At that time of life, parents are *teachers of God appointed to that end*; and *vigilant moral teaching* is worth ten times all the reading done before that age by children even of the most cultivated mental powers."—ADAMS' Elements of Christian Science, p. 309.

"The family circle is the nursery for Heaven. There the infant heart is moulded in its moral sensibilities; there the sympathies and affections all germinate and bud; and there all the ties are formed and strengthen daily, which bind the little pupil to man and to God—to time and to eternity. In

II. *This Education, thus begun at home, is to be continued in the school.* The physical powers of the child are already well developed, and are daily increasing in vigor. Its moral powers, through the judicious instruction of wise parents or faithful guardians, or interested sponsors, are alive and quick. And now its mental powers are cultivated and strengthened by the study of books and the contact of mind with mind. Here comes in the influence of the teacher, the school master, who oftentimes has all knowledge, but no ability to impart it; who is wise in book lore but not wise in the things which pertain to human nature; who is great in intellect but lacking in self-control; who is a strict disciplinarian but knows not how at times to unbend and to come down to the level of his pupils, and who therefore soon loses their respect and never gains their love and confidence. But, granting that he has all the qualifications of a good and safe teacher, the question to be considered in connection with our subject is this: Whether any school is what ought to be for the sons and daughters of Christian parents which practically divorces Religion and Learning, which makes no attempt in its course of study, or in its system of discipline, to keep secret from the world's prying gaze, under the eyes only of those whom God appoints, the tender plant grows up, so that it may be transplanted to the paradise of God, or to be cast away and withered forever. There in the family circle, is not only the home of the affections—the fountain of earthly bliss—but only the source of social security and national prosperity is the birth-place of man's character, and of his eternal destiny!"—BISHOP OTTEY.

through the direct and personal influence of its head, to foster in the pupils a religious spirit, to cultivate in them a manly Christian Department. to lead them to do right because it is right, to put them often on their moral responsibility; which, in a word, proceeds upon the theory that the mind is all it has to train and takes little or no account of the heart, the affections, the higher spiritual nature. The school may be celebrated for turning out "great scholars," it may be fashionable, it may have certain advantages which are to be found nowhere else; but still the question remains to be decided: While the young are as plastic clay in the hands of the potter, shall they be sent to schools in which the principals are not God-fearing men and women; in which the voice of prayer is never heard; in which the word of God is never read; in which Sacred Music is not practically learnt, in which the History of Christianity is not studied; in which no attempt is made to continue that wise training of the moral powers which has been so judiciously commenced at home? No conscientious Christian man or woman can hesitate, it seems to us, to give the right answer to this most important question.

III. But, once more, *this work of Christian Education, begun at home, continued at the day or boarding School, is also to be carried on simultaneously in the Church.* At home the child is under the care and guidance of his parents In

the school he is under the eye and moulding hand of the Teacher. In the Church he is to feel the influence of the pastor in his varied ministrations. Here comes in the Sunday-school with the lessons weekly committed to memory, and recited to faithful and interested teachers; the words of prayer and praise said and sung, and the good books and papers taken home to read. Here comes in the Pastor's brief Sunday address on the Collect or Gospel for the day or on the associations connected with each returning festival. Here comes in the monthly service for the children, with the Pastor's questions and comments on the Church Catechism. Here comes in all the good impressions which are received in the House of God, impressions made by the solemn prayers, the inspiring music, the earnest preaching, the noble architecture,

"The storied windows richly dight
Casting a dim religious light"—

impressions which never fade from memory's tablets, and lead to results which shall be fully known and appreciated only in eternity.

And here is the place to note the fact that the Prayer Book lays down a certain system of Christian Education. "A child," (we quote from the excellent Report already referred to,) "being made in Baptism 'a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,' is to be trained up as such from infancy, in the knowledge and practice of his baptismal cove-

nant with God. The duty of so training him is laid upon his parents, his sponsors and his pastor. For their help and guidance a Catechism is provided, which is not only doctrinal but practical; and the Liturgy, the Sacred Year, and all the godly customs appointed, as well as the whole tone and spirit of his life in the Church, are all homogeneous therewith; are all parts of the one great and well-tried system under which a child can be virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life. Every service he joins in and every day he keeps; every contact of any kind with the Church, which is always faithful to her Lord in her order and worship, helps to store his memory and his heart with impressions and knowledge no less valuable than those which he gains when consciously a scholar."

And now, for it is time to bring this discussion to a close, let us ask whether this ideal is impossible of reallization in these days. We are bold to affirm that it is not. We are sure that there are parents who do not forget that their children have souls as well as minds and bodies. We know that there are schools and colleges in which Religion and Learning are not divorced. We know that there are clergymen who love to feed the lambs of Christ's flock.

Christian readers, is this true Prayer Book ideal of a Christian Education realized among you, and if not, why not? Perhaps these striking remarks from the Report which describes this

ideal may enable you to give the answer :

“ By far the larger part of the errors and vices, the irreligion and infidelity, of the age is directly chargeable to the neglect of home culture by the fathers and mothers of the land. . . . The causes which have led to the wide departure in this regard from the habits of our fathers are numerous. The great one, no doubt, is the intense earnestness which animates almost all in their worldly pursuits. The father has but little intercourse with his children; for his business will not permit it. The mother finds the cares of the family and the demands of society too urgent for the proper discharge of her religious duty to them. And so they are both likely to resort to the compromise and substitutes which have been provided, and to be careless about the influences which will do as much for their children's education as any purposed training can do.”

And again, “ It is the glory of our country that schools are provided for the children of all classes. It is not yet the glory of our Church that she has provided for her own children's daily tuition in ‘ those things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health’ ” We must not admit that religion can be rightly or safely divorced from education. Divine truth should be learned along with the lessons of the school, and enforced and illustrated in its discipline and order.”

These extracts are, it seems to us, as true as the

Gospel, and suggest the main reasons why the Prayer Book ideal is not more generally realized among us; (1) Parental neglect, arising from the several causes enumerated, and (2) the want of more Day and Boarding schools of the right description.

Christian reader, are you making the religious education of your children one of the great ends and objects of your life? If you have never been in the habit of "catechizing" them, in the sense of the wise man's injunctions make an early beginning. If you have hitherto sent them to any school without regards to its moral and religious influences, choose for them hereafter the best school that your means and circumstances will permit, and, if possible, one in which the well-tryed system of our Household of Faith, is the recognized foundation.

If they are still unbaptized, no longer neglect to perform your duty towards them as declared in the Offices and Standards of our Reformed Branch of the Church of Christ, excusing yourself with the pleas "It is not necessary," or "I do not believe in it," as though your private judgment, resting as it does upon no careful and dequate examination of the subject, should be allowed to stand for a moment against the judgment of the Church Universal, in every age, as to the necessity and importance of Infant Baptism.

See well to it, again, that Home is indeed for

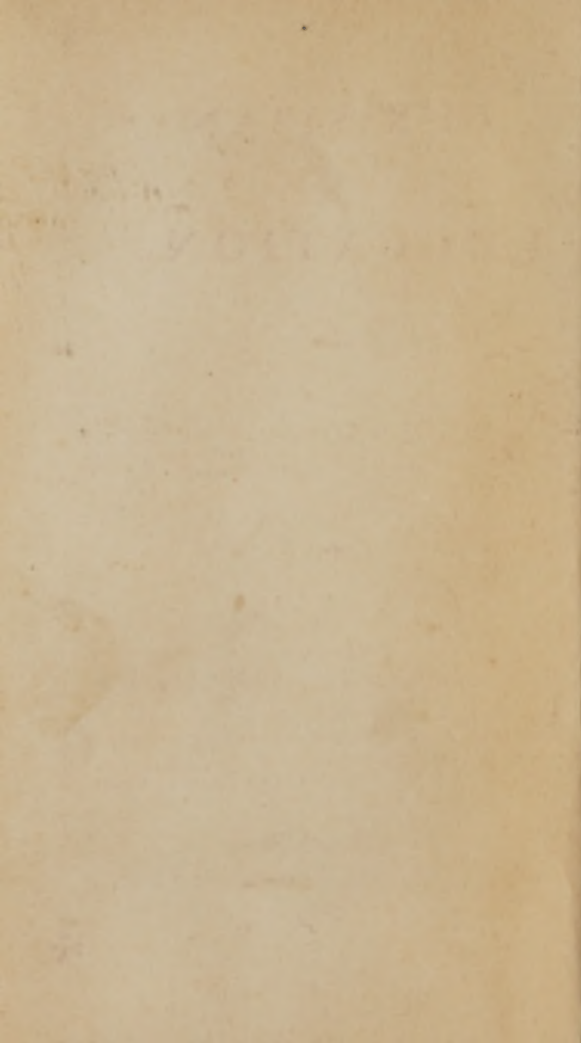
you and yours "the dearest spot on earth." Let it be a Home sanctified by prayer, and the reading of the Word of Life, and the singing of the sacred songs of the Church. Let it be a Home cheered by the sunshine of loving hearts; a Home where Christian mirth is oft a willing guest; a Home where none but good books and good papers are to be found; a Home from whose mystic spell the soul of no member of the family circle shall ever be released.

And, lastly, though your children walk not in the way they should go, pray for them and keep on praying for them through life; even as Monica did for her son St. Augustine, with a brief reference to whose history this discussion will conclude. Married to a pagan nobleman, though herself a sincere Christian, Monica's prayers and efforts are untiring that her son may grow up in the true faith of Christ. But in vain. Educated in pagan schools, he embraces the pagan Philosophy, and steeps his soul in every form of sin. Powerless to rescue him from his delusion, Monica weeps and prays. Through youth and long after he has come to man's estate, her prayers and tears are unavailing. For more than twenty years her personal entreaties with him, and cries to heaven, are apparently unheeded. Having however, been appointed a teacher of Rhetoric in the Emperor's palace at Milan, Augustine goes out of curiosity to hear St. Ambrose, the great Christian Bishop and preacher. The pagan

rhetorician is impressed; he seeks the society of the Bishop; and "after repeated interviews, prolonged conversations, severe conflicts of soul, the strife of passion with conviction, and many providential occurrences, such as the song of a child from a neighboring house, the conversion of his own youthful son, the happy presence of his watchful mother, the accidental reading of a passage from St. Paul's Epistles, his obstinate heart yields to Christian persuasion and his reason consents to the faith of his childhood." He becomes a Christian, and is baptized and confirmed in his thirty-third year. *A mother's prayers are answered.* But this is not all. At the end of three years' preparation, Augustine enters the Sacred Ministry, is soon made Bishop of the Church of Hippo, in Africa, and for thirty-five years, that is, until his death, discharges the duties of his high office with a zeal, a fidelity, and a vigor that are still the admiration of the Christian world.









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